

## **Lighting of the Second Candle:**

It is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent and so we light the 2<sup>nd</sup> candle...

If you sometimes feel afraid...

if you sometimes feel like you are not good enough,  
or if you have ever felt disregarded or disrespected...

This candle is being lit for you....it is the Shepherds' candle.

They felt all of those things and yet....

it was to them that the Angels of heaven  
announced the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem...

They, the lowlife, the misfits, the nobodies,  
they were invited to run and see the newborn Messiah.

Although they didn't know it at the time....

Love was being born right in their midst!

Come...let us hear the angels sing,

let us accept the invitation and run to see Love born once again....

### **Reading:**

Luke 2: 8-20

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields,  
keeping watch over their flock by night.

Then an angel of the Lord stood before them,  
and the glory of the Lord shone around them,  
and they were terrified.

But the angel of the Lord said to them,

“Do not be afraid; for see-

I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:  
to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,

**who is the Messiah, the Lord.  
and this will be a sign for you:  
you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.**

**And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,  
praising God and saying,**

**“Glory to god in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”**

**When the angels had left them and gone into heaven,  
the shepherds said to one another,**

**‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing  
that has taken place which the Lord has made known to us.**

**So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph,  
and the child lying in the manger.**

**When they saw this, they made known what had been told them bout this child,  
and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them**

**Everyone that is but Mary.**

**Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.**

**The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen,  
as it had been told them.**

**Meditation:**

**Do you believe in angels?**

**The ancient peoples certainly did...**

**They had no doubt in their minds that angels existed and that they were God's messengers...**

**Just look at Scripture...it is full of angels, from beginning to end.**

**In our Christmas stories angels offer an invitation from God to Mary**

**They appear in a dream to Joseph**

**and share the good news of the birth of the Messiah to the shepherds.**

**Now, remember the shepherds were not the upstanding citizens of their country... they weren't the good guys of the synagogue...**

**These guys were not the kind of guys you would want your daughter to hang out with...**

**but yet, the angels come not with a warning that they had better get right with God or else... but with a message of Good News for these nobodies...nobodies**

**Do you think you are a nobody? Many of us do...**

**If you even have a spec of self awareness...you become all too well your faults and failings..**

**Most of the time many of us cannot imagine that God would ever want to speak to us or share any good news with us,**

**because we are so not worth it...**

**So week I began to wonder if that is why so many of us don't believe in angels anymore?**

**because we are not good enough?**

**not holy enough to be visited by such amazing beings who close to God?**

**If that is the case for you, I'm here to say: STOP THAT!...**

**because being good and holy doesn't seem to be necessary criterion for an angel visit....**

**THAT is one piece good news from our Scripture today!**

**So...what would an angel visit look like today?**

**Well...as I started to imagine**

**the first thing I did was to eliminate seeing angels as beings with**

**flowing hair, rosy cheeks and fluffy wings...**

**and then I started thinking over my own life: have I had any angel visits?**

**I wasn't sure that I had, so I started to ask other people.**

**"have you had an angel visit?"**

**Very often they would responded:**

**"what do you mean by an angel visit?"**

**"I'm not sure...what do you think?"**

**"mmmm..... I'm sure I have, Let me think a minute..."**

**so then, I waited...and waited....and waited....**

**and then I would ask them..**

**have you received a message of hope lately?**

**did someone share an uplifting thought with you lately?**

**did someone affirm some goodness in you that you did not recognize in yourself?**

**Were you the recipient of unrequested kindness or generosity?**

**did you feel Loved? and by whom?**

**Because kindness, hope, goodness, generosity, Love are signs of the Presence of God...**

**Those people, those situations, those beings that bring us these gifts ...**

**bring us the Presence of God...**

**and thus: they are God's messengers...**

**They are our Angels.**

**They may be our family or they may be a stranger...**

**They may appear as our pets or as a wild creature who happens to "show up"**

**when we least expect it.**

**Angels open doors us for us when our hands our full...**

**and they somehow know to call us when we need a friend...**

**Angels seem to know just what we need when we need it...**

**With all that in mind, Let's just take a minute to think back upon your own life, ok?**

**I'll ring the bowl to begin our minute of reflection....**

**and then three times at its end...ready?**

**We have a few minutes for a couple of stories: anyone want to share their story?**

**I have a renewed belief that Angels are everywhere!**

**They show up in many forms, shapes, sizes and species!**

**Perhaps these next couple of weeks we can keep our hearts and our minds  
open for the appearance of Angels...**

**and perhaps once we notice them, we will not forget to say, "Thank you!" amen.**